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~~SECRET~~226. Castro's Cuba - 1960

11 April 1960

January 1960 brought to a close Fidel Castro's "Year of Liberation". The Cuban people find themselves ruled by an extreme leftist clique which has eliminated moderate and experienced politicians, suppressed the free press, created communist-style propaganda organs such as the news agency, Prensa Latina, and the government mouthpiece, Revolucion, imprisoned revolutionaries for "treason", re-established military courts fixing the death penalty for "counter-revolutionary activities" (disagreement with the regime), expropriated lands for cooperatives rather than individual ownership, lost world-wide sympathy for the Revolution because of abuses of power, damaged US/Cuban relations with a "hate America campaign" and confiscation of US holdings without adequate compensation, and promoted closer ties with Communist bloc countries (establishment of the Chinese Communist New China News Agency in Havana, sale of sugar to the USSR, Soviet Exposition in January). Externally, Castro's attempts to "throw off the imperialist yoke" and identify Cuba with the neutralist bloc (Egypt, Indonesia, Yugoslavia, etc.) were demonstrated by his proposal to hold a conference of underdeveloped countries in the fall of 1960 and his invitations to Nasir, Sukarno and Tito to visit Cuba in the near future. Castro-backed invasion attempts in the Dominican Republic, Panama and Haiti indicated the far-reaching and dangerous ambitions of Castro's leftist oligarchy. Among the 26th of July Movement there is a growing disillusionment with the "revolutionary" regime, a feeling also held by moderate Cubans who wish to restore the true goals of the Revolution, because they now fear that Castro has become a willing fellow traveller who is destroying their hopes for a free, democratic and prosperous Cuba.

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11 April 1960

227. The Summit Conference

The Summit meeting begins in Paris on 16 May. The major topics for consideration are the West Berlin problem and disarmament. The Soviet Union will probably attempt to utilize the conference to drive wedges between the Western powers, to create the impression that the USSR is the only great power actively seeking disarmament and peace, and to gain Western recognition for the legitimacy of its East European empire.

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11 April 1960

228. Latin America Moves to Stop Arms Race

Latin American concern with the subject of world disarmament was demonstrated by active participation in the disarmament resolutions passed at the 14th UN General Assembly and by recent statements and proposals sponsored by President Alessandri of Chile and President Prado of Peru, leaders in the movement to stop the arms race in Latin America. They strongly believe that the use of limited resources for military expenditures impedes needed economic development. The majority of South American governments have expressed support for arms limitation proposals--the exceptions are Brazil and Paraguay. The Central American governments with the exception of Costa Rica and Mexico have shown little interest in the proposals. The animosity existing between Cuba and the Dominican Republic precludes consideration of arms limitation efforts by them. Although civilian leadership has largely superseded military dictatorships in Latin America in recent years, the armed forces have strong and often preponderant influence in many countries and continue to press for additional armaments for reasons of national prestige or political purposes, thus seriously obstructing concrete measures to limit arms. In addition, traditional political border rivalries and a strong concept of nationalism inhibits joint Latin American action to limit arms purchases. Of primary concern are the non-competitive relative armament levels to be maintained by each country adequate for hemispheric defense and internal security. A conference on arms reduction attended by ten South American nations, to be held in Uruguay in June or July 1960 is under active consideration. The Chilean government is prepared to initiate unilateral freezing of armaments as an example for the rest of the continent if adequate security guarantees are received from the United States.

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229. Racial Violence in South Africa

The apartheid policies of the Union of South Africa, based on the principle of separate development of the non-white and the white, arise from the sense of superiority felt by the whites and from the fear that the numerical superiority of the Africans (70%) will eventually cause the whites to lose their predominant political and economic power. However, the economic development of South Africa has come about through a combination of white capital and management with cheap African labor. The whites find themselves unable to implement strictly separate African development without losing their source of cheap labor. At the same time, exposure to a Western urban, industrial economy creates a climate in which tribal traditions are eroded and desires and expectations which cannot be fulfilled under the apartheid policies are developed. The result is a gradual rise in the level of dissatisfaction among the Africans. So long as the strict apartheid policy is pursued, the racial tension will continue to rise. The recent difficulties, sparked by African resentment at the internal pass law, began on 21 March at Sharpeville when the South African police, after being stoned by the crowd, opened fire with machine guns. Following this, a series of incidents occurred, including a strike by the Africans which made apparent to all the key role the Africans play in the economy. Panicked by the strike, the South African government declared an emergency and banned all African political organizations. Incensed by the brutal repression, the Afro-Asian nations requested a meeting of the Security Council, which was held on 30 March, and which passed a resolution calling for the abandonment of apartheid and called on UN Secretary General Dag Hammerskjold to reduce the threat to international peace arising from the South African problem.

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Item #227: Press Comments of 7 April 1960 reprinted an article by Dean Rusk entitled "The Presidency" from the April, 1960 issue of Foreign Affairs. The latter part of this article carries a valuable discussion of the problems of Summit conferences. This article or excerpts from it might be replayed where appropriate.

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